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## THE COLORADO POTATO BEETLE

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[A Digest]

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Lately the Soviet press has published dispatches about the new crime of American imperialists, who dispersed the Colorado Potato beetle and its larvae from planes over the territory of the German democratic republic. Appearance of the Colorado potato beetle in Austria, France, and Italy has also been noted. American imperialists have likewise intentionally introduced the Colorado potato beetle from the American Zone of Germany onto the territory of Czechoslovakia.

The Colorado potato beetle (*Leptinotarsa decemlineata*) is a deadly danger to potato crops and represents a serious threat to agriculture. By spreading this pest in foreign countries and thus condemning their population to hunger, Wall Street businessmen are attempting to unload on the European market their supplies of chemicals and other products.

Already the name of the beetle indicates that its origin is in the USA. [Data on the discovery of the beetle in the western part of the USA in 1822 and its gradual spread on the North American continent until it reached the Atlantic coast in 1874 follow. Thereupon the author gives detailed information on the beetle and its habitat].

The beetle may stay alive for several years while being deprived of food for periods extending over several months. Its vitality is truly astonishing. Specimens which have been kept up to five days on the bottom of a vessel containing sea water revive and are capable of flying again. Beetles which had been brought by the waves of the sea to the Baltic coast and cast on dry land there revived and began to fly upon drying out.

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The Colorado potato beetle may do damage to many other plants besides potatoes. Notwithstanding its vitality, it cannot live in the permafrost area or the deserts of Central Asia.

Being able to fly and swim well, the Colorado potato beetle may penetrate into the USSR. The extermination of this pest is an arduous and expensive business. The most convenient time for taking measures against the beetle usually coincides with regular periods of field work such as crop maintenance or harvesting. The slightest relaxation of measures taken against the Colorado potato beetle results in its rapid propagation and spread over extensive areas.

The principal tasks at present are discovery of the first beetles which may appear in western border areas where potatoes are planted, and their immediate extermination. Under border areas one must understand not only land frontiers, but also the western sea coast, air fields, railroad rights of way, railroad stations, automobile highways, etc.

Any instance of finding a Colorado potato beetle must be immediately reported to the nearest agronomist, agricultural plant quarantine inspector, or land office. On being notified, specialists thoroughly investigate the surroundings of the place where the beetle has been found and disinfect the fields and soil, not sparing great expense in doing so.

Soviet plant breeders are conducting very important and difficult work on the creation of varieties of potato which are resistant to the Colorado beetle. On investigating wild solanaceae, it was established that *Solanum demissum*, *Solanum Jamesii*, and other representatives of this family are almost unaffected by the beetle. By crossing the commonly cultivated potato with these wild plants, varieties of potato which are resistant to the Colorado potato beetle are obtained.

Notwithstanding the difficulties connected with this work, the solution of the problem posed here is entirely feasible. In 1932, Soviet

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scientists introduced varieties of potato that are resistant to phytophthora. The development of potato varieties which are resistant to cancer has also been successfully accomplished in the USSR. There can be no doubt that a variety of potato which is resistant to the Colorado beetle will also be developed.

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